

Small Group Discussion Questions

Lancaster County

What is occurring in your communities which addresses these responsibilities and areas for action?

- Freshman Academy
- Improved School Facilities
- Full-Day Kindergarten
- GEAR-UP Program
- First Steps (collaboration with other non-profits)
- HEAP
- Upward Bound
- Expanded # of counselors (Smooth Sailing Program)
- Reach Out & Read; Dolly Parton Imagination Library; Countdown to Kindergarten; FAST; Born To Read
- Geographically-expanded teacher recruitment
- Mentoring program for beginning teachers
- Teacher signing bonuses & competitive salaries
- Strong commitment to technology
- Mentoring program for at-risk students
- OSP @ USCL
- Faith-based initiatives
- Adopt-a-leader/Home child visitor
- 9th Grade Academy
- Student clustering by interest area/ Education and Economic Development Act
- Improved early confidence building in key subjects
- Different motivational tracks
- Increased avenues and communication
- parents involved early
- increased focus and literacy
- 1st Steps – ELOA
- Head Start
- Reading 1st
- E. H. S.
- Ameri Corps
- Library Out Reach
- Gear Up
- Mobile Dental

- Fast – Family Nights
- ESOL/ ESL
- After school
- Parent / Child Home
- Born to Read
- Reach out and Read
- Newspapers in Ed.
- Hope on Hill
- Youth Build Parenting – Barr St. Communication Center
- LEARN TV
- USC-L Program
- TRIO
- Upward Bound
- J. Marion Sims
- LAUGH
- LIFT
- Christian Services
- Principal, teachers, and cadets seeking out pre-school families.
- Talking in communities with other pre-schools as to what kindergarten expects
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What are the critical barriers to fulfilling the commitment in your community?

- Lack of / resources
- Lack of finances
- Community attitudes toward the value of education
- Federal micro management of education (teachers spend too much time on reports and paperwork)
- Children being raised by surrogate parents
- Teaching / education not financially lucrative (our “best and brightest” generally do not become teachers)
- High attrition rate for new teachers

- Additional demands placed on schools and teachers due to changing student demographics
- More guidance counselors to assist
- Identify children at risk of dropping out
- remove barriers to pursue vocational study
- encourage all students in all sectors
- create sense of urgency/ contagious “Education/ Graduation” is my goal
- remove barriers for parents we are not reaching
- Re-examine ACCOUNTABILITY METRICS
- “Teaching to the test”
- Testing 5 days in a row – children are too tired
- PACT too late in year – Not vertically aligned
- Having Confederate Memorial Day off interrupts testing
- Field Testing in Middle
- Graduation requirements vs. college entrance are different
- School schedule – mentoring
- Health care not affordable
- Transportation issues
- Economic issues
- Report Card Penalty for 4 yrs.
- Teacher Retention – Mentoring
- Lack alternative Education
- Changing parents perception that senior year in high school should be easy
- Issue of staffing and security in buildings and transportation
- Gear-up program

List the five most important things you community can do to address the responsibilities of Common Ground.

- Spear head a community initiative to address the challenges and problems which exist
- Utilize local and national foundations (grants, etc.) to create, support and expand programs tat foster school retention and educational success

- Better marketing and PR about “success stories “ and better/ more comprehensive response to uninformed criticism
- Expansion of existing programs to reach isolated/ under served areas of the county/ community
- Remove unnecessary administration/ burdens for teachers, principal, leaders, counselors
- Utilize technology to increase “teacher time” / increase efficient communications and administration.
- Increase the use of schools as Community HUB – re-examine
- Neighborhood school / church partnerships – cost impact?
- Focus on what is best for the child and models that work (small class size, loyalty to schools, parent outreach
- Reserve local governance funding formula
- Bring all community members into our schools (i.e., festivals, faculty lunch by church, Veterans Day, etc.)
- Find a way to cement the school / community bonds.
- Parent involvement
- Emphasize the value of education
- Better collaboration between groups in community.
- Flexible transportation is important
- Technology access for education is important
- Corporate support thru human resources for technology, money, etc.

List the five most important things you as an individual can do to address the responsibilities of Common Ground.

- volunteer in schools
- Principals Choice Awards
- Highlight “Good Things Getting Done”